



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, September 8, 2022
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Minutes

Members: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); : Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); The Honorable Lynne Harris (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Dorne Hill (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); The Honorable Sidney Katz (Montgomery County Council); Tondalayo Royster (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Ben Stevenson (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation); Jessica Volz (Adventist Healthcare); Maura Lynch (Community Member); Michelle Maxberry (Community Member); Amy Palumbo (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Lavontte Chapmon (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member);

Guests: Captain Amy Daum (Montgomery County Police Department); Captain Gerald McFarland (Montgomery County Police Department); Colleen Bokman (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Leslie Hawes (Court Watch Montgomery)

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

Debbie Feinstein reviewed guidelines for virtual meeting participation. She asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. Debbie Feinstein asked the participants to use the chat function if they would like to speak and to use the raise hand function. She also requested that participants should identify themselves each time they speak.

III. Approval of May Minutes and the July Email Update

The May 12, 2022 DVCC meeting minutes and July 14, 2022 email update were reviewed. Amy Palumbo proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Judge Karen Ferretti and passed.

IV. Announcements

Tom Manion announced a couple of staffing changes at the FJC. FJC Program Manager Ngozi Obineme is leaving and a new Client Assistant Specialist will be starting next week.

V. DVCC Member Interviews

Smita Varia will be scheduling interviews for new DVCC members. Lynne Harris, Amy Palumbo, Michelle Maxberry, Maura Lynch, Tom Manion, and Debbie Feinstein volunteered to be on the interview panels.

VI. Discussion: Court Watch Montgomery's Staggered Exit Report

Leslie Hawes, the Executive Director of Court Watch Montgomery gave a brief overview of a report on staggered exits after court hearings. The report is online at https://mcusercontent.com/c40b68d32cf4a8d43a03d44ca/files/35ff6e9a-49b1-aa44-c580-b9c938d26b1d/Final_CWM_Staggered_Exits.pdf.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Maura Lynch, Chair*

The legislative committee would like to formally ask the DVCC to support the Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense bill. Currently, Maryland allows marriage to be a defense to some sex crimes including rape when someone is incapacitated or cognitively impaired. Smita will send out more information in the coming weeks.

Debbie Feinstein mentioned that SB20/HB284 - Criminal Procedure - Out of Court Statements - Child Victims and Witnesses bill, which expands the tender years exception to the hearsay rule to include alleged victims and witnesses of crimes of violence who are under 13 years old will go into effect on October 1st. This will now allow pre-trial statements to be heard in court from a child who witnessed domestic violence.

Smita Varia also mentioned the bill that was passed by the County Council that will offer rebates and vouchers for installing security cameras. This will be helpful for domestic violence victims because security cameras are the most common requested item for the Emergency Relief Fund from the Family Justice Center Foundation.

B. Victim Services Committee update – *Tom Manion, Chair*

Tom Manion reported out on updates with the Victim Services Committee. They focused the meeting on legal services. Maura Lynch is working on launching Expungement clinics for survivors of domestic violence. Colleen Bokman also raised the issue of the lack of attorneys to help with protective order cases and Family Law cases including divorce and custody. The committee would like to reach out to law students to take protective order cases under the supervision of an attorney. Tom Manion also mentioned looking into a certification process where attorneys could take a training to get certified to work with DV clients and then make a commitment to take cases.

The committee has also made a connection with the ACCESS program to connect survivors with services to address addiction.

C. Education and Outreach Committee – *Debbie Feinstein, Chair*

Debbie Feinstein reported on events the Education and Outreach Committee is planning for October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month. There will be a Proclamation presentation on October 4th with the County Council and the County Executive. There will be displays that tell a survivor's story and display a pair of shoes called "In their shoes." These posters along with FJC outreach cards will be displayed around the County. Smita Varia sent out a template email to the Council asking them to spread the word.

Tondalayo Royster is working on a new Apartment initiative called Safe Homes, Safe Communities. The goal of this initiative is to work with apartment complexes and offer workshops on domestic violence, bystander intervention and tenants rights and to make sure the FJC awareness cards are available.

- D. Offender Program and Policy Committee – *Vacant, Chair***
No update at this time.

VIII. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on November 10, 2022, 5pm-7pm



Domestic Violence Coordinating Council